General Assembly

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Fifty-sixth session
Agenda item 12

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*without reference to a Main Committee (A/56/L.68/Rev.1)*]

56/258. Meeting of the General Assembly devoted to information and communication technologies for development

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 55/2 of 8 September 2000, entitled "United Nations Millennium Declaration", in particular paragraph 20 of the Declaration, the ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2000 of the Economic and Social Council,[1] agreed conclusions 2001/1 of the coordination segment of the substantive session of 2001 of the Council,[2] and other relevant resolutions,

Recalling also its resolution 56/183 of 21 December 2001, in which it welcomed the fact that the World Summit on the Information Society would be held in December 2003 in Geneva and in December 2005 in Tunis,

Recognizing that information and communication technologies are among the critical determinants for creating a global knowledge-based economy, accelerating growth, raising competitiveness, promoting sustainable development, eradicating poverty and facilitating the effective integration of all countries into the global economy,

Recognizing also that the information and communication technologies revolution poses opportunities and challenges, and that there is a pressing need to address the major impediments to the participation of the developing countries in that revolution, such as lack of infrastructure, education, capacity-building, investment and connectivity,

Mindful that market forces and the role of the private sector are fundamental, but that they alone will not suffice to bridge the digital divide and to promote digital opportunities, and convinced that partnerships involving Governments, multilateral development institutions, bilateral donors, the private sector, civil society and other relevant stakeholders will play a key role in bridging the divide,

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[1] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/55/3/Rev.1), chap. III, para. 17.

[2] A/56/3, chap. V, para. 7. For the final text, see *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 3*.

Convinced that the United Nations system should play a leadership role in promoting synergies and coherence of all efforts directed at expanding the development impact of information and communication technologies,

Welcoming the fact that the Information and Communication Technologies Task Force was launched on 20 November 2001, and fully convinced that the Task Force will play an important role in harnessing the power of information and communication technologies for advancing the internationally agreed development goals,

Welcoming also the fact that the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2001/24 of 26 July 2001, extended the mandate of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Informatics until 31 December 2002,

1. *Decides* to convene a Meeting of the General Assembly consisting of three plenary meetings devoted to bridging the digital divide and promoting digital opportunities in the emerging information society during the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly; the Meeting will address the digital divide in the context of globalization and the development process and promote coherence and synergies between various regional and international information and communication technologies initiatives, including, inter alia, the Information and Communication Technologies Task Force and the Digital Opportunities Task Force; the participation of all relevant organizations will be encouraged;

2. *Also decides* that, parallel to the plenary meetings, separate informal panels will be organized that will include the participation of non-governmental organizations, academia and the business sector;

3. *Stresses* that the Meeting shall be prepared and organized in a manner that will assist Governments and all the relevant partners in their preparations for the two phases of the World Summit on the Information Society, to be held in December 2003 and December 2005, and their preparatory processes;

4. *Requests* the President of the General Assembly to make proposals in consultation with Member States, for consideration by the Assembly, on the themes of the informal panels;

5. *Also requests* the President of the General Assembly to make proposals, in consultation with all Member States, for consideration by the Assembly, on the representatives of non-governmental organizations, academia and the business sector who will be invited to participate in the informal panels, taking into account the principle of equitable geographical representation, relevant expertise and the need to obtain the perspective of developing countries;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide all necessary administrative and organizational support for the preparation of the Meeting;

7. *Decides* to include in the agenda of its fifty-seventh session an item entitled "Information and communication technologies for development".

93rd plenary meeting
31 January 2002